

I am proud that we will take the lead in rebuilding Iraq, but like so many Americans, I think it is time that we rebuild America, too. We want our troops who are bravely serving our country abroad to come home to a revitalized economy—to an America that is stronger and more prepared to meet the many challenges before us.

None of us are under any illusions about the magnitude of those challenges. But we owe it to our troops and their families to be equally as realistic about the challenges that we face right here at home. Again, I would like to thank my colleague for his leadership on these issues.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my special order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the gentlewoman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

HONORING RANDY REHN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. MUSGRAVE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, this week I had to do the hardest thing that I have done since I have been in Congress. In our offices, in the rooms that we go into even for our hearings, the images of the war are on the TV. We have seen them now day after day. But this week those images became very personal to me. I received word that one of my constituents, Randy Rehn, from Longmont, Colorado, a young man serving his country in Iraq, lost his life. When I got the news, I wanted to call Randy's family and offer my sympathy. And when Randy's mother answered the phone, I got a lump in my throat that would not go away. I have a son about that age, and I thought of what his mother was feeling at that time, and as I talked to her, she told me that just 2 short years ago she lost Randy's father to cancer and so she was facing this crisis without him, but she said she was very thankful that her other children were there with her and were supporting her.

When we think about these losses, this war becomes very real to us. As I talked on to Randy's mother, she told me that he had a little daughter who is less than 1 year old. And tonight I would like to speak to little Megan, and I would like to say some things to her that will mean something to her when she is older and she can read this and she can understand. I would like to

say to little Megan tonight, the precious little girl that will have to grow up without her father, that your daddy was serving his country and he was doing what needed to be done for little children just like you, Megan.

I want Megan to know that her dad is a hero. I want her to know that he was doing a job that was extremely hard to do, and he was doing it willingly, and I am sure he was well aware that there were sacrifices to be made. So tonight, Megan, I want to say to you that your daddy laid down his life for others, especially little children like you.

The Scripture says that our God will be a Father to the fatherless, and I just pray a special blessing on your little life, Megan, that God will bless you and your family, and I want you to always remember that your daddy was a hero and we love our soldiers who serve this country, who lay down their lives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DELAURO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE AMERICAN PARITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to join the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) and my other colleagues to talk about some of the choices that we now face in this country as illustrated by this chart. I know that all of us were pleased to see the reaction by the people of Baghdad today as the regime of Saddam Hussein crumbles. I know that all of us are so proud of the men and women of our Armed Forces who have conducted themselves with courage and character. And while it is certainly true that many difficult and dangerous days may lie ahead, it is important that as a Congress and as a country, we now begin to think about the future.

We have made a promise to the people of Iraq that we will not abandon them, that the United States will continue to provide security and help them to rebuild their country. We must and we will fulfill those promises. But, Mr. Speaker, what about the promises made to the American people? After all, American soldiers are fighting this war and the American taxpayers are funding it. Does it not make sense that the American people should not be forgotten in all of this?

Last week this Congress approved \$1.7 billion to fund the rebuilding of Iraq from schools to roads and bridges to hospitals to clean water, \$1.7 billion. Meanwhile, in the Republican budget for 2004, the American people are being shortchanged. While Iraq will receive hospitals, maternity care, and access

to health services, not one new dollar is spent on 42 million uninsured Americans. While Iraq will have nearly 3,000 miles of their major roads repaired, the Republicans cut the American Transportation budget by \$6 billion. And perhaps most outrageously, while we pay to rebuild or renovate 25,000 Iraqi schools, the Republican budget contains not one dime for school construction or modernization in the United States. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we do not even have a school construction and modernization program in this country. The Republicans keep voting it down. Meanwhile, here in the Alice in Wonderland House of Representatives, the Republicans are insisting, insisting, on keeping their \$750 billion tax giveaway to the wealthiest Americans. Tax cuts for the wealthy while our deficit is exploding, while veterans' benefits are slashed, while millions of Americans lose their jobs, while States are facing their worst fiscal crises since World War II, while millions of seniors struggle to pay for their prescription drugs, while local communities across the country are laying off police officers and teachers and firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, the priorities of the majority leadership of this House are just wrong. I am pleased to be an original co-sponsor of the gentleman from Illinois' (Mr. EMANUEL) bill, the American Parity Act, which attempts to restore some balance to our budgetary process, and I believe that this bill is a better expression of the priorities of the people I represent in Massachusetts. Indeed, I think it is a better expression of the priorities of the majority of people in this country.

It is important for us to live up to our promises to help the Iraqi people. America must be a Nation that keeps its word, and we will, as this chart points out, and as we voted last week by approving the supplemental appropriations billing. For example, also, as co-chair of the Congressional Hunger Center, I am especially concerned that the necessary food and other humanitarian assistance gets to the Iraqi people who need it as quickly as possible, and we need to be there to make sure that that happens. We must rebuild Iraq, but we must rebuild America as well, and I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure we do that.

Mr. Speaker, we can do much better for the people of this country than the Republican budget puts forward. Our people in this country deserve the same attention to the issues of education, healthcare, infrastructure, transportation that we are giving to the people of Iraq. Again, we support rebuilding Iraq. We support keeping our promises, but we are also insisting that we keep our promises to the American people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MCCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.